

TRANSLATION

Talks by Hakuin Introductory to Lectures On the Records of Old Sokkō (*Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu*)

TRANSLATED BY NORMAN WADDELL

Introduction

The Zen scholar Rikugawa Taiun, author of a standard study of Hakuin's life, no doubt echoed the received opinion in the Rinzai sect when he described the *Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu* 息耕録開筵普說 as "Hakuin's major treatise on Zen." All the favorite themes that appear again and again throughout Hakuin's writings are present in this long work in *kambun*: the urgent need for students to obtain the guidance of an authentic teacher; the absolute necessity of *kenshō*, and of continued practice beyond *kenshō*; and the sharp denunciations of his Zen contemporaries, especially those who expounded the doctrines of "silent illumination," or included Pure Land practices in their training. The *Kaien fusetsu* reveals perhaps more clearly and fully than any other of Hakuin's works his basic attitudes towards Zen teaching and practice.

The *Kaien fusetsu* was transcribed by an attendant of Hakuin's named Genshoku for use as a series of general or informal talks (*fusetsu*). It was read at the opening of a lecture-assembly held at Hakuin's home temple, the Shōin-ji, in 1740. This text was later revised by Hakuin for publication at the Shōin-ji (1743).

The basic text at this lecture-assembly, the *Sokkō-roku*, or to give it its proper title, the *Kidō-roku* (Chinese, *Hsu-t'ang lu*; "Records of Kidō"), contains the writings and life records of the Chinese master Kidō Chigu 虛堂智愚 (Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu, 1185-1269) of the Southern Sung dynasty. The title *Sokkō-roku* is an invention of Hakuin's; it was taken from a literary name that Kidō is known to have used. Although Kidō did not acquire much of a reputation in

WADDELL

his native China, he and his *Records* have been held in great esteem in Japanese Rinzai Zen, whose main teaching lines trace their descent directly from him, through his Japanese disciple Nampo Jomyō (Daiō Kokushi).

I have used the text and commentary in the *Kaien fusetsu kōwa*, "Lectures on the Kaien fusetsu," which is a transcript of *teishō* by the modern Rinzai master Mineo Daikyū (Chuō-bukkyō sha, Tokyo, 1935). The translation begins with a foreword (here abridged) written by Genshoku for the original woodblock edition of 1743.

Foreword

In spring of the fifth year of Gembun (1740), master Hakuin yielded to persistent urgings from students far and wide and delivered a series of lectures on the *Records of Sokkō*, beating new life into the rhythms of Sokkō's ancient melodies.

Preparations were set in motion the previous winter. After the meal at the November twenty-first memorial services commemorating the anniversary of Bodhidharma's death, the group of ragged monks living in huts around the Shōin-ji, about a score in number, met and decided to prepare the way for a lecture-assembly by making repairs to the temple so that it would be ready to host a group of visiting students.

They shored up rickety old buildings. They sunk a new shaft in the well. They mended doors and windows. They strapped up the broken roof beams. While Taku, Tetsu, Sha, and Sū worked at these tasks with great vigor, Brother Kyū went far afield collecting a store of grain and pulse, and Brother Chū made the rounds of neighboring villages begging vegetables. The rest, working in shifts, labored feverishly through the days and long into the nights.

The master kept his distance while all this was going on. Quitting the temple, he took disciples Jun and Kō and sought refuge at a place called Hokusui. A little over ten days later he moved on to Fujisawa, where he lodged with Mr. Seki, a layman living in seclusion. He remained almost a month, during which he devoted all his time, except when called upon to receive visitors, to a session of blissful sleep. His snores resounded through the house like claps of thunder. The foundations shook; the dust flew wildly about in the rafters. He slept face to the floor, lying curled up like some great, well-fed snake. Visitors gazed at him in wonder. Attendants Jun and Kō, greatly distressed, pleaded with him:

"Great master, we have received an earnest request from Brother Chū at the Shōin-ji. He wants us to ask you to give the brotherhood a talk setting forth

KAIEN FUSETSU

your ideas on Zen. It would greatly encourage the younger monks. If you will dictate it to us, we will write it down and take it back to the temple to show them. It will divert their minds from the hard work.”

The master agreed, a faint smile crossing his lips. But then he just turned over and resumed his slumber. Time and again Jun and Kō came to him and like little children begged him to get up and begin. Finally, he shut his eyes and calmly and quietly started to speak. Sometimes the words filled five lines in transcript; sometimes ten lines. He uttered them just as they came to his mind. Kō took them down. Jun revised them. As he dictated sentence after sentence, heedless of sequence or order, Kō's brush traced them tirelessly down on the paper. Master and disciples labored as one, losing themselves completely in the work at hand. By the time they reached Mr. Seki's hermitage, the talk was finished. It filled a total of fifty sheets of paper.

Attendant Genshoku made an offering of incense and composed this foreword after the meal at services commemorating the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment. The third year of Kampō (1743).

Kaien fusetsu

YEARS AGO, at the beginning of the Chien-yen era (1127-1131) of the Southern Sung, the Zen priest Bukka, residing at the Ling-ch'uan temple on Mount Chia in Ling-chou, composed a series of long commentaries on the hundred cases of Myōkaku Daishi.¹ Priest Bukkan sent him a letter of reproach, using a tone of language harsher than one would expect even from one's own flesh and blood.² Bukka realized that the criticism was just, and thereafter ceased from writing commentaries. This should be a valuable lesson for us all.

So why am I about to commence licking up all the fox slobber that Priest Sokkō spued and left behind him in those ten temples where he served?³ Why do I brazenly ascend the high teaching seat like this, clutching a hossu in my hand, to diminish the dignity of a whole hall full of priests?

¹ Chinese, Fu-kuo 佛果; the honorary title of Yuan-wu K'o-ch'in 圓悟克勤 (Enko Kokugon, 1063-1135), a Dharma heir of Wu-tsu Fa-yen 五祖法演 (Goso Hōen). While residing at the Ling-ch'uan-yuan 靈泉院 (Reisen-in) on Chia-shan 夾山 (Kassan) in Ling-chou, Bukka lectured on the *Hsueh-tou po-tse sung-ku* 雪竇百則頌古 (*Setchō hyakusoku juko*), a koan collection compiled by Hsueh-tou Ch'ung-hsien 雪竇重顯 (Setchō Juken, 980-1052), consisting of Hsueh-tou's verse comments on a hundred koans. Myōkaku Daishi 明覺大師 (Ming-chueh Ta-shih) is Hsueh-tou's posthumous title.

² Fo-chien 佛鑑; the honorary title of Ta-p'ing Hui-ch'in 太平慧勤 (Taihei Egon, 1059-1117) who, like Bukka, was a Dharma heir of Wu-tsu Fa-yen. A letter from Bukkan to Bukka is found in the *Tsu-men ching-hsun* 禪門警訓 (*Shimon keikun*, "Admonitory Instructions for Buddhist Monks"), a work first printed in the Yuan dynasty. The text of this letter is given in the *Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu dasoku* 息耕錄 開經善說蛇足 ("Snake Legs for the Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu"), p. 5, verso.

³ Fox slobber (*koen* 狐涎) is a virulent poison. It refers here to the double-edged nature inherent in verbal expressions of Zen: Fox slobber can destroy students who come into contact with it, or it can work as a miraculous medicine, curing them of their mental sicknesses and leading them to true awakening. In an afterword to the *Sokkō-roku kaien fusetsu*, Hakuin is quoted as saying: "When Sokkō Roshi [Kidō] died, he had spued up poisonous slobberings of word, thought, and deed, and left them behind to await some future descendent of his who would be able to use it to turn his back on the master's teachings." Kidō Chigu served as abbot at ten different temples during his career. The main body of his religious records, the *Hsu-t'ang lu* (*Kidō-roku*), is divided into ten sections, containing the teachings he gave at each of the ten temples.

KAIEN FUSETSU

I was blown by the winds of karma to this broken-down old temple at the beginning of the Kyōhō era (1716–1736). I have remained here alone for the past twenty years, without any disciples. In that time, I have been visited by students from all corners of the land, asking me to give them talks and lectures on sutras and other Zen writings. Some of them brought rosters bearing names of hundreds of students. Others submitted requests in elaborately written compositions twenty or thirty lines long. All together, I suppose this must have happened to me at least thirty times now. I can't tell you how it has interfered with my sleep!

A few of the students burned with genuine zeal and determination. They had been to Zen teachers throughout the land appealing for help. They had laid their grievances before lay followers far and wide. Seeing the vehemence with which they sought to attain their goal, I wanted to respond to their needs and do what I could for them. But my temple is extremely poor. The kitchen shelves are bare. From the far north of the country to the far south, there is not a single soul who does not know about the poverty at the Shōin-ji.⁴

I am deeply concerned about the sharp decline in Buddhist practice in recent years, and the sad decay of the Dharma. The younger generation of monks are a pack of misfits—irresponsible and ungovernable scoundrels. When they first come to me, I cannot help loving them for their quiet, unassuming manner. My head bows before their good and humble spirit. I think: "They are genuine. Monks determined to break through to enlightenment. Their thoughts are fixed firmly on the matter of birth-and-death."

But before even a month is up, they turn from the excellent norms and customs of the past as they would from dirt. The time-honored temple regulations mean no more to them than clods of matted filth. They band together in groups and proceed to run roughshod through the temple. Roaming the gardens and corridors hollering to one another. Loitering in the passageways singing and humming. The senior priests have no control over them whatever. Even the temple masters are powerless to stop them.

They sever the bucket rope at the well. They overturn the temple

⁴ Hakuin describes his life at this period in his autobiography *Itsumadegusa* ("Wild Ivy"). See *Eastern Buddhist*, xvi, 1 (Spring, 1983).

bell. They topple the big temple drum. When night comes, they slink furtively in and out through openings they burrow in the walls. They gather in front of the hall, capering about and singing tunes they pick up in the village. They swarm over the hill in back of the temple like ants, clapping boisterously and aping one another. They prop sharp sickles up in dark corridors where the unsuspecting will walk into them. They stack large jars filled with water in passageways where people will be sure to knock them over. They crack the floor-planks over the privy so that when men squat on them they will tumble into the pit-filth. They plague the monks in the kitchen by pouring water over the firewood so they will be unable to light the ovens in the morning. They make the rounds of local teashops and wineshops, gleefully abandoning themselves to shameless amusements.

While there could be a thousand men inside the temple devoting themselves to their training with untiring zeal, because they do not venture outside the gates for the entire retreat, no one witnesses their illustrious achievements. The rowdy miscreants who haunt the town streets engaging in these unsavory pastimes may be no more than two or three in number. But it all takes place in broad daylight, where everyone can see it. So their black sins are known to all.

Ahh! because of the mindless and irresponsible behavior of a handful of monks, how many tens of thousands of their fellows have to share their notoriety. Jades and pebbles thus are both tossed aside and rejected. Gold and steel melted into one common lump. Good lay men and women come to despise all monks as if they were filthy pigs, or loathsome curs with running sores. They are subjected to the biting censure of the true practitioner. Their flagrant acts are engraved indelibly in the public mind.

It is deplorable, the harm that they do. At once the dignity and authority of the Buddha's Way is lost. The radiant glow of the Dharma teaching is suddenly snuffed out. Eight thousand Yaksha-demons will swoop down and sweep away every trace left by the Zen priesthood. Deva-hosts will scrape all their names from the sacred Dharma-rosters.

At first, I assumed that these fellows would devote their lives to imparting the great Dharma-gift to others unconditionally. Make the teaching bequeathed by the Buddhas of the past flourish once again. Who could have foreseen such a lamentable outcome? To think

KAIEN FUSETSU

that gangs of these wretched bonzes would wreak untold damage on the ancient style of their own Dharma-ancestors!

Such a wild assortment of sights and scenes! You would think you were on a battlefield. Or gazing at herds of deer bounding madly over a wild moor. It is enough to quiver the liver of Fei Lien. It would set Wu Lai's teeth chattering in uncontrollable terror.⁵ Arrogance in all its forms. Every conceivable shade of madness and folly.

These fellows think nothing of the achievements bequeathed to them by their predecessors. They arrogantly deprive later students of their rightful legacy. They will not be satisfied until they have trampled the Dharma banners under their feet and brought total discord to the sacred precincts of the temple.

These are the real Dharma reprobates—the ones to call “hopelessly unteachable.” They are heretics masquerading in Buddhist robes. Avatars of the Evil One himself. Incarnations of the arch-fiend Papiyan, stalking the earth.⁶ Even after they die and fall into one of the dreadful realms of hell and have undergone all the unspeakable agonies that lie in store for them there, they will still have no way to repent and atone for the terrible evil they have committed.

Their teachers or their parents sent them out on their Zen pilgrimage, giving them a sum of money for their travelling expenses. If they saw them in their present contemptible condition, do you suppose for a moment they would be pleased?

Recently, seven or eight trusted disciples of mine, men with whom I have lived and practiced, combined their efforts and prepared the temple for a meeting. They hauled earth and cleared away rubble and stones. They drew water. They got the vegetable gardens up to pitch. They experienced cold and hunger. Endured full shares of pain and suffering. They started at dawn, their robes wet with dew. The stars were out when they returned. They worked on the monks' quarters, the well, the cooking ovens, the privy and bath house. Ten thousand hardships. Untold difficulties. Why you broke into a sweat just watching them. Your eyes swim just hearing about their deeds. And when you

⁵ Fei Lien and Wu Lai. Evil ministers who served under King Chou.

⁶ Mara: an evil spirit who constantly obstructs the Buddha-truth. Papiyan, murderer and destroyer, is a particularly malevolent form of Mara who destroys all that is good.

consider that monks must go through the same thing at any other training hall in the land. . . . It certainly is not easy.

Then, when all these preparations are made, we have these lawless misfits descend upon us, stirring up trouble and throwing the meeting into disorder . . . what on earth goes on in those minds of theirs? The Naga gods and Devas standing guard over the Dharma wail out in lamentation. The local earth gods burn with anger and resentment. Monks of this kidney have always been around. They have appeared throughout the ages. But not a single one has ever succeeded in carrying his practice through to completion. Even if they do not run foul of their fellow men, there is no escaping the retribution of Heaven. They are nearing the three-forked junction.⁷ They should be shaking in their sandals.

I have always felt an intense loathing for monks of this type. They are tiger-fodder, no doubt about it. He will rip them into tiny pieces. The pernicious bandits, even if you killed off seven or eight of them every day, you would still remain totally blameless. It is because of them that the patriarchs' gardens are so derelict. It is they who have turned the verdant Dharma foliage into a vast, withered wasteland.

We have in this Zen school of ours an essential Barrier that must be passed through. A forest of thorns and briars that must be penetrated.

⁷ This is an allusion to a story found in the *Ta-hui Wu-k'u* 大慧武庫 (*Daie Buko*, "Ta-hui's Arsenal," beginning of the second volume), a Sung dynasty collection of Zen-related anecdotes compiled by Ta-hui Tsung-kaio (Daie Sōkō). Attendant Hei served Zen master Myōan for many years. Although he trained hard and was able to grasp the essentials of Myōan's Zen, he was jealous of his fellow monks and attempted to discredit them whenever he could. For this reason Myōan did not name him as his successor, despite his seniority. He told his other disciples that because Hei had a black heart, he would meet with a violent death, which would occur, he said, holding up three fingers, "at a place like this." After Myōan's death, Hei succeeded in becoming the master of the temple. Claiming that the geomantic situation of Myōan's memorial tower was unfavorable, he ordered it burned down. As the tower was being consumed by the fire, it collapsed and fell open; to everyone's astonishment, Myōan's corpse was still as fresh as life, completely unscathed by the flames. Hei took up a hoe, split open Myōan's skull, took out the brain, poured oil over it, and threw it back into the flames, where it was soon reduced to ashes. His fellow priests reported what had happened to the civil authorities. Hei was severely reprimanded and forced to return to lay status. He wandered aimlessly about the country, trying without success to gain entrance to other Buddhist communities. Then one day as he was walking near an intersection of three roads, he was set upon by a tiger, and eaten, fulfilling his master's prophecy.

KAIEN FUSETSU

But these people don't even know that such things exist. They haven't encountered them in their fondest dreams.

Now, wherever you go you come upon worthy senior priests, fully qualified Zen teachers, who cannot bring themselves to take on a large group of students if it means having to deal with these trouble-makers. They would rather find some tranquil spot where they can "hide their tracks and conceal their light," and make themselves into winter fans and straw dogs.⁸

So even if there is a priest who through authentic practice has achieved a mastery of Zen, he will refuse students no matter how fervently they beg him for help. Turning his back on them, he contents himself with a spare, comfortless existence, heedless of privations such as cold and hunger. After a lifetime of carefree idleness, he will eventually waste away inside a small hermitage in some remote corner of the land. And who can blame him?

The Dharma banners are thus being destroyed by the ravages of these unruly monks. The damage they cause to the true style and customs of the Zen school is terrible to see. I can't stand them. For a long time I tried to ignore them. But recently a group of virtuous priests from different parts got together to do something about the problem. I am ashamed to report that they decided to come to me and take me to task for neglecting my teaching responsibilities.

The keen and eager monks who were hungering for a teacher, greatly encouraged and emboldened by this, made their descent. Now, they come at me from all quarters. Like hordes of wasps rising from a broken nest. Like a mob of ants thronging from an anthill to the attack. Some are like white-cheeked infants seeking their mother's breast. Some are like black-hearted ministers out to squeeze the populace dry. I can't come up with an excuse to turn them away. I don't have the strength to push them off. I find myself pinched into a tight corner, all avenues of escape cut off.

Thoroughly scrutinizing my life, I can discover nothing worthy of others' respect. I can claim no moral worth for them to esteem. I am ignorant of poetry. I don't understand Zen. I'm as lumpish and indolent a man as can be found. I float heedlessly on, doing only what pleases me. I sleep and snore to my heart's content. As soon as I get up, I begin

⁸ That is, make themselves useless.

nodding off again, like a rice-pounder, deep in daydreams. You won't find much resemblance between me and a real Zen teacher. Not one trait for younger monks to emulate. No one is more keenly aware of this than I am. I view these defects of mine with constant loathing. But nothing can be done about them. I'm a lost cause.

It's easy work for the villainous monks of today to get the best of a bumbling, good-for-nothing blind old bonze like me. They can disrupt a meeting, throw it into utter confusion, even cause it to break up early. If that happens, I'll just wait till they have gone, have someone clean up, then I'll close shop and resume my slumber where I left off. It won't plunge me into despair.

On the other hand, if thanks to the efforts of my veteran disciples we are able to get through the retreat successfully, that is just fine—but it won't send me into transports of joy. I have no great desire to think up comments for Zen texts. I am not all that keen on sitting and lecturing from a high seat. All I really want is for the worthy masters around the country, including my former comrades, to overlook my shiftless ways and not despise them. I'd like to have a couple of them drop around. We could go together into the hills behind the temple, gather sticks and fallen leaves for fuel, simmer up some tea, and enjoy ourselves, unburdened with work, leisurely talking over old times. We could spend several months savoring the pleasures of a pure and carefree existence.

At the same time, I have several things that I want the monks engaged in penetrating the Zen depths all to know about. When the resolve to seek the Way first began to burn in me, I was drawn by the spirits of the hills and streams among the high peaks of Iiyama. Deep in the forests of Narasawa,⁹ I came upon a decrepit old teacher in a mountain hermitage. His name was Shōju Rōjin. His style was Etan. His Dharma-grandfather was National Master Daien. His Dharma-father was Shidō Munan.¹⁰ He was a blind old bonze filled with deadly venom—true and authentic to the core.

⁹ The site of the Shōju-an, where Shōju Rōjin lived. Narasawa is the name of a section of Iiyama. See Hakuin's autobiography *Wild Ivy*, part I, fn. 68, *Eastern Buddhist*, xvi, 1 (Spring 1983).

¹⁰ Shōju Rōjin 正受老人 (Etan 慧端), 1642–1721, was the priest whom Hakuin considered his master. Daien Kokushi 大圓國師 is the posthumous title of Gudō Tōshoku 愚堂東庵, 1579–1661. Shidō Munan 至道無難, 1603–1676; for his biography, see *Eastern Buddhist* III, 1 (June 1970).

KAIEN FUSETSU

He was always telling students:

“This Zen school of ours began to decline at the end of the Southern Sung. By the time it had reached the Ming the transmission had fallen to earth, all petered out. Now, what remains of its real poison is found in Japan alone. But even here there’s not much. It’s like scanning the midday sky for stars. As for you, you smelly blind shavepates, you ragtag little lackwits, you haven’t stumbled upon it even in your dreams.”

Another time, he said: “You’re imposters, the whole lot of you. You look like Zen monks, but you don’t understand Zen. You remind me of the monks in the teaching schools—but you haven’t mastered the teachings. Some of you resemble precepts monks, yet their precepts are beyond you. There is a resemblance to the Confucians—but you haven’t grasped Confucianism either. What, then, are you really like? I’ll tell you. Large rice-bags, fitted all out in black robes.”

Here is a story he told us:

“There is a Barrier of crucial importance. In front of it sit a row of stern officials, each of whom is there to test the ability of those who wish to negotiate the Barrier. Unless you pass their muster, you don’t get through.

“Along comes a man, announcing that he is a wheelwright. He sits down, fashions a wheel, shows it to the officials, and they let him pass. Another person walks up, an artist. He produces a brush and paints them a picture. They usher him through the gates. A singing girl is allowed to pass after she sings them a refrain from one of the current songs. She is followed by a priest of one of the Pure Land sects. He intones loud invocations of the Nembutsu—‘*Namu-amida-butsu,*’ ‘*Namu-amida-butsu.*’ The gates swing open and he proceeds on his way.

“At this point, another man clothed in black robes appears. He says that he is a Zen monk. One of the guardians of the Barrier remarks that ‘Zen is the crowning pinnacle of all the Buddhas.’ He then asks: ‘*What is Zen?*’

“All the monk can do is to stand there, in a blank daze, looking like a pile of brushwood. The officials take one look at the nervous sweat pouring from under his arms and write him off as a rank imposter. A

highly suspicious and totally undesirable character. So he winds up as a poor devil of an outcast, condemned to a wretched existence outside the Barrier. What a pitiful turn of events.”

Shōju also told us: “Suppose at some future day you men have temples of your own. You receive an invitation from one of your parishioners, asking you to visit him at his home. When you arrive with your head monk and some of your students, you are ushered into a large room, where you find layers of thick, soft cushions to sit upon. Dishes filled with rare delicacies are arranged before you. You sit there in high spirits, partaking of the food without a single qualm, regarding it as your due. When you finish eating, as you are enjoying yourself amid the loud talk and boisterous laughter, one of the people present addresses you, and brings up a difficult point of Zen—the kind that furrows the brows of Zen monks. He suggests casually that you explain it. At that moment, what kind of response will you make? Your heart will probably start to thump wildly in your chest. Your body will break out in a muck sweat. Your distress will cast a black pall over the entire room.

“So inasmuch as you are members of the Zen school, you should concentrate diligently on your training. If you don’t, you will be unwittingly sowing the seeds of your own shame and disgrace. There’s no telling when you’ll find yourself in such a harrowing situation. It’s too terrifying to contemplate.”

Shōju also said: “In recent times, monks are given the *Mu* koan to work on.¹¹ With diligence and concentration, one man—or half a man¹²—among them may possibly be passed by his teacher. But achieving this first small breakthrough, he forgets about his teacher and believes that he has enlightened himself. He crows loudly about it to others. These are sure signs that he is still confined within birth-and-death. He now proceeds to breed ideas of his own on various matters pertaining to Zen. With cultivation, these grow and prosper. But the gardens of the patriarchs are still beyond his farthest horizons.

¹¹ A monk asked Jōshū: “Has a dog the Buddha-nature?” Jōshū said: “*Mu*” (No).

¹² *Ikkō hankō* 一箇半箇, literally, “one person, half a person,” is usually used when emphasizing the difficulty and necessity for a Zen master to find a suitable heir among his disciples: half a man is better than none at all.

KAIEN FUSETSU

“If you want to reach the field where true peace and comfort are found, the more you realize, the more you will strive. The farther you reach, the farther you will press forward. When you finally do see the ultimate truth of the patriarchal teachers, it will be unmistakable—as if it is right there on the palm of your hand. Why is this? *Don't cut your nails at the foot of the lamp.*¹³

I know a wealthy family in the province of Shinano. They have a large inherited fortune, and the influence they wield rivals that of the provincial daimyo himself. The family is so large that they must ring a dinner bell to call them all together. The great and powerful are frequent visitors. Although they have no family business as such, they have been able to maintain a quiet and comfortable existence.

But recently they started brewing sake. They added male and female servants to the staff. The water mill now grinds away day and night hulling rice. A continuous procession of grain carts thunders heavily in through the gates. Their prosperity has increased tenfold over what it was before. Ten thousand bushels of rice are said to be consumed daily in the brewing of sake.

An old man living nearby and witnessing these events, said: “Those folks are finished. Their prosperity cannot continue much longer. What you now see is really a symptom of serious trouble. When the inner workings decay, the outer aspect always swells like that. They will probably try their hand at selling grain. Or open a shop to sell medicinal herbs. But before long they will have to dispose of them too.”

When my teacher Shoju Rōjin heard the old man's prediction, he heaved a heavy sigh.

“I know just what he means. Since the Sung period, our patriarchal school has been in constant decline. Zen monks have extended their interests into a variety of different fields. It's just like the family in that story.”

As he finished speaking, his eyes were swimming in tears.

¹³ This proverb was a favorite of Shōju Rōjin's. Traditional Zen commentaries often say that it is totally beyond verbal explanation. As a proverb, it seems to be a warning against cutting fingernails or toenails at night, when evil spirits, thought to enter the body through the fingernails, are out and about.

WADDELL

I have recorded as I remember them a few brief examples of Old Shō-ju's instructions. I thought that they would give you an idea of the anger, the scoldings and verbal abuse, the shouts of encouragement, that he used in his daily teaching, as well as of the deep concern and sad regrets he often voiced about the present state of the Zen school.

(To be continued)